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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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CONSERVATION IS A WAR WEAPON

No matter how bravely our armed forces fight, we will fail them if we permit failure in our factories or on our farms.

Agriculture's great responsibility is to produce enough food and fiber to provision Americans and their allies wherever they may be, for as long as the war lasts. Our farmers have been called upon to break all food production records in history. This means growing the right crops, on the right land, in the right way. To fail in either of these would hamper production, prolong the war, take a greater toll of lives, and conceivably might turn the tide against us.

The only way to produce what we need, in the amount we need, and when we need it is by running our farm plant with the greatest speed it can stand, without burning it out. The farm plant, like any other production machinery, will break down if it is driven too hard, for too long, without great care in its management and upkeep.

If our farm plant breaks down in the middle of the fight, say two or three years from now, it may spell our doom. Too much is at stake, too much depends on our agriculture to let that happen. Ours is one of the last free nations whose agriculture is still free and productive.

We can't trust to luck with mismanaged land. We can't permit waste of soil, seed, fertilizer, labor, or moisture needed for growing the strategic crops that are so vital to our success.

Many an American farmer today is asking himself: How can I produce as much as possible of what we need, this year and in the years to come? The answer lies in a conservation system of farming.

Conservation farming means growing the proper crops on the land best suited for these crops. It means using the conservation practices that will insure the best yields -- consistently, year after year -- because they hold the water, the fertilizer, and the soil itself, in the fields on the land.

Farmers all over the country have demonstrated how the various practices, used separately or in combination, have boosted crop returns. The following examples illustrate the value of utilizing, to the utmost, these conservation methods to achieve our war production goals.

More Grass and Better Pastures

A Minnesota farmer, by following wise pasture methods, increased his average butterfat production from 257 pounds per cow in 1938 to 292 pounds in 1940. In drought periods his pasture was green while others were brown.

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In Franklin County, N. C., improved pastures resulted in an average increase of 19 percent in the number of animal units carried per acre for the grazing period, and substantial reductions in the quantities of roughage and concentrates fed to livestock.

#### Strip Cropping

In West Virginia a 30 percent increase per acre in tomato yields was achieved through the use of strip cropping which prevented erosion and conserved moisture in the soil.

#### Cover Crops Plowed Under

In North Carolina, a field planted continuously to corn without a cover crop produced 31 bushels of corn to the acre. In a two-year rotation of corn and cotton, with crimson clover turned under each year, 51 bushels of corn per acre were produced.

#### Range Pastures

By following good range management, including reduced stocking, West Texas rancher increased the weight of his calves by 75 pounds at selling time.

#### Water Conservation

In New Mexico, where the rainfall averages only about 10 inches a year, edible bean yields were almost 50 percent higher from fields that were contoured and terraced than from fields that were not.

#### Conservation System

On a farm in Franklin County, N. C., a system of conservation farming was established consisting of small reductions in acreages of corn and cotton, retirement of a limited acreage of crop land to permanent meadow and annual lespedeza, the use of cover crops, terracing, contour tillage, lime and commercial fertilizer. The result was to increase the production of cotton 10 percent, corn 30 percent, forage crops 15 percent, and the land was protected against erosion.

#### Contouring Saves Fuel, Time

Many of the conservation practices which help to boost yields also decreases the amount of power and labor required for producing the crop. A study in Nebraska showed that 10 percent less time and 17 percent less tractor fuel was used in producing corn on the contour than was needed on non-contour listed fields. On wheat land in Western Kansas, 10 percent less time and 22 percent less fuel was required in disking stubble on the contour.

#### Meeting Goals Through Conservation

These are some of the widely-used ways in which conservation farming will help America meet the war goals for agriculture. For almost 10 years American farmers have been following some or all these practices. The improved soil and stored up fertility from 10 years of conservation farming are standing us in good stead now. Without it, we would be working against great odds in meeting production goals this year. Unless conservation methods are continued and improved and spread to more and more farms, our chances of maintaining a high production of food and fiber will be slight.

Conservation is a war weapon.